

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system comprising a control unit that receives images associated with two or more regions of a local environment, the two or more regions each being serviced by a respective telephone extension, the control unit processing the images to identify, from a group of known persons associated with the local environment, any one or more known persons located in the respective regions and, for each known person so identified, generating an indicium that associates the known person with the respective region in which the known person is located.

2. The system of Claim 1 further comprising two or more cameras that provide the images associated with the two or more regions of the local environment, each region having associated therewith at least one of the two or more cameras, wherein images captured by the at least one camera associated with each region are processed to identify any known persons located in the respective region.

3. The system of Claim 1, wherein the indicium generated by the control unit, for each known person identified, that associates the known person with the respective region in which the known person is located is incorporated in a signal.

4. The system of Claim 3 further comprising a private branch exchange (PBX), wherein the signal is output by the control unit to the PBX.

5. The system of Claim 4, wherein, for each known person identified, the PBX uses the signal to create a record that associates the known person with the telephone exchange servicing the respective region in which the known person is located.

6. The system of Claim 5, wherein, when the PBX receives an incoming call for one known person of the group of known persons and determines that one of the records relates to the one known person, the PBX connects the call to the telephone extension associated with the one known person in the record.

7. The system as in Claim 1, wherein the indicium, for each known person identified, that associates the known person with the respective region is incorporated in a record maintained in the control unit.

8. The system as in Claim 1, wherein the control unit switches an incoming call to at least one of the respective telephone extensions servicing at least one of the two or more regions in which at least one identified known person is located.

9. A system comprising a control unit that receives images associated with two or more regions of a local environment, the two or more regions each being serviced by a respective telephone branch, the control unit processing the images to detect any persons located in the respective regions and switching an incoming call to at least one of the respective telephone branches in which at least one detected person is located.

10. A method for directing an incoming telephone call, the method comprising the steps of:

- a) capturing images associated with each of a number of regions of a local environment;
- b) identifying, from a group of known persons each associated with the local environment, any known persons in each of the number of regions from the captured images associated with each of the number of regions;
- c) identifying a desired recipient of the incoming call;
- d) determining whether the desired recipient is one of the known persons identified in one of the regions in step b; and
- e) where the desired recipient is one of the known persons identified in one of the regions in step b, connecting the incoming call to an extension servicing the respective region in which the desired recipient is located.

11. The method of Claim 10, wherein the step of capturing images associated with each of a number of regions comprises, for one or more of the regions, directing at least one camera at at least a portion of the region.

12. The method of Claim 10, wherein the step of capturing images associated with each of a number of regions comprises, for one or more of the regions, positioning a camera to capture images at an entrance of the region.

13. The method of Claim 10, wherein the step of identifying any known

persons from the captured images includes applying image recognition processing to the images.

14. The method of Claim 13, wherein the application of the image recognition processing to the images includes accessing a database of image data for the group of known persons.

15. The method of Claim 10 wherein step b further comprises creating a record associating each known person identified from the captured images with the respective region in which the known person is located.

16. The method of Claim 15, wherein the step of determining whether the desired recipient is one of the known persons identified in one of the regions in step b comprises searching the records relating to each known person and the respective region in which the known person is located.

17. A method for directing an incoming telephone call, the method comprising the steps of:

- a) capturing images associated with each of a number of regions of a local environment;
- b) detecting any persons located in each of the number of regions from the captured images associated with each of the number of regions; and
- c) connecting an incoming call to an extension servicing at least one

of the regions in which at least one person is located.

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